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Universities of Culture

P. Ludimova,

The organisation of popular lectures and general education courses on artistic and aesthetic subjects is not, of course, new—either in the USSR or elsewhere. But there is something really new in the "Universities of Culture" movement, the scope and scale of the project, and its popular backing.

Everyone will tell you that these "Universities," a mere year old, are still only just beginning. But even so, in their first year, no less than five million people attend courses at them.

There are already more than a thousand of these "Universities," established in towns, on farms and at large industrial enterprises.

Free Courses

They give free courses on Russian, Soviet and foreign literature, on the general history of the fine arts, music, the theatre and the cinema.

A 300-hour curriculum, has been worked out, lectures being given, as a rule, on Sundays.

The main method of tuition is in the form of lecture courses by experts in their

line. Any one who wishes may attend, irrespective of educational qualifications.

The first of these centres of cultural education arose, spontaneously, among members of a big railway men's club in Gomel. That particular "University" now has over a thousand students, studying music, the theatre and the fine arts in a three-year course.

In Kharkov the regional trades council and many factory T. U. committees, set up "Universities" in twelve of the biggest clubs. They have a student body of more than 7,000.

How are they financed? At Kharkov not a penny—kopeck rather!—has been spent on the dozens of lectures, concerts, meetings. Composers, writers, artists willingly donate their services, clubs make premises available, provide publicity.

Different Courses

The courses and facilities vary widely, but everywhere great care is being devoted by enthusiastic volunteers to their preparations.

At Kharkov, for each lecture big exhibitions are organised, relevant literature on art is sold and relevant documentary items screened.

The local radio and TV service has broadcast more than 30 programmes for the students.

The variations in the curriculums at the various "Universities" is natural and desirable. They cannot be made into fixed educational establishments or standardised, nor should they have any uniform compulsory syllabuses and curriculums.

Countrywide Movement

The universities of culture are the offspring of mass initiative and any attempt to wrap them up in red tape can only do harm.

Of course, like all new things, there is still a great deal of trial and error to be experienced in the development of the movement. But it is clear already that this movement has really become a nationwide one.

EXAMINATION AND DISCIPLINE

T. R. VENKATASUBRAMANYAM, B.A., M.Ed., TIRUMALI TURAI

"All fundamental objectives of education are ultimately concerned with the modification of behaviour"

—E. F. Lindquist

The problem of examinations is being thrashed out so thoroughly today that practically nothing is left now for anyone to talk on it. But there are still one or two things that have eluded or escaped this great analytical scrutiny. Examinations are devised to assess the progress of an individual towards the objectives that are set before him. The task of education is to acquaint every child with essential facts, skills and ways of behaviour. This clearly implies the setting up of standards or objectives in learning facts, skills and ways of behaviour. The next question will naturally be about these standards. Fortunately, we, as teachers, are not totally ignorant of them. Of the three, the standards of behaviour were established long, long ago, and they are more sustaining and stable than those of facts and skills. There is a dividing line between facts and skills on one side and ways of behaviour on the other side. (We need not discuss here the differences between facts and skills themselves; they have their own elements of antiquity,

worth, stability etc.) This division finds its place in terms of immediate and ultimate objectives in any pattern of education. The acquisition of necessary or essential facts and skills should generally be the immediate objective of education and the modification of behaviour the ultimate objective. The ultimate must always be realised only in and through the immediate. This is the essential law of education, of all life and of anything behind and beyond life. So facts and skills, in a sense, serve as means to learning ways of behaviour. If we are to test the child, we must test how far he has progressed towards both the objectives, immediate and ultimate. Any examination, if it should remain true to itself, must always assess the progress of an individual towards both.

Generally, the great ancients have set the standards of conduct and behaviour, and most of them, in one ascending voice, advocate the process of disciplining the individual for realising the ultimate objectives. Aristotle has said that education must help pupils to hate what ought to be hated and love what ought to be loved. There was a period—of several

centuries—when this disciplinary conception of education was reigning supreme in the philosophy of education. The great educational movements during the Middle Ages, and the views of John Locke and his followers are standing examples of this conception. We should also admit that discipline means good conduct and behaviour, and that the ultimate objectives of education can be conveniently subsumed under this disciplinary conception. If we devise tests really to examine the child, they should test both his knowledge and his educational status—knowledge of facts and skills and educational status in terms of ways of behaviour or discipline. But, in actual practice, all our examinations stop with facts, and rarely do they test skills. No child is examined today in his progress towards worth-while ideals. This is a major defect in the present system of examinations.

But, in spite of our indifference towards discipline, unconsciously we test children in some of the disciplines. We indirectly approve of the educational philosophy of Locke. He claimed that reasoning and memory are the most important faculties, and mathematics and logic the most important subjects to discipline these two faculties. He did not hesitate to declare that he wanted his children to learn mathematics, not to become mathematicians, but to become reasonable creatures. Whether we accept this faculty theory or not, we, while bearing with him with some sort of amused tolerance, have already fallen a prey to this disciplinary conception. Take, for example, our examinations in elementary mathematics. We have been awarding marks to partly-correct solutions to problems. Even if the final answer is wrong, we give marks to the procedure, if it is logical. We give marks to stages of development. In practical geometry, we award some marks for drawing the rough figure. In graph, we give marks if the student is able to find out a suitable scale; or if he is able to allot and mark the two variables along

the axes. Take anything in mathematics, our evaluation is definitely influenced by the disciplinary values of the subject as enunciated by Locke. If mathematics is to develop logical thinking and memory, we must value the answers to problems, giving due consideration to these two mental abilities. We are doing it unwittingly, unconsciously. If the procedure is logical to a particular stage in solving a problem, we give marks. If the student is able to put down on paper correctly the formulae, identities, equations etc., again we give marks. If he solves the problem completely, we give full marks. So, we measure the pupil's progress in mathematics, both in its disciplinary influence and also in its knowledge aspects. We test the pupil, especially in mathematics, for his progress towards immediate objectives like speed and accuracy and ultimate objectives like reasoning and memory. Though many mathematicians do not approve of such a procedure in valuation, the examinations in mathematics satisfy the criterion of a good test—they test the knowledge and educational attainments of children simultaneously. Facts, skills and disciplines are all tested here. But this completeness is limited to mathematics alone, because the nature of the subject is such.

If we think that we are right in assessing the progress of students towards the acquisition of both content and discipline in mathematics, why should we not extend the same to other subjects also? We know that life is not divided into subjects. We, in order to acquaint the child with necessary ways of behaviour, have organized life's experiences into subjects and connected activities. This special classification of life, which is otherwise one continuous whole for any individual, into different subjects, has led us to the folly of assuming that subjects are separate entities by themselves; and at present we are committing the greatest mistake in equating these separate subjects themselves to what

is contained in prescribed textbooks. "Indeed, one of the most common of all real objectives in teaching, in general, is 'to teach the facts contained in the textbook'. Such objectives as 'to acquire a sound knowledge of world geography', 'to know the important facts of United States history', and 'to understand common natural phenomena', are often only another way of saying, 'to know what is in the text'. The really functional objectives of many school subjects—the day-by-day objectives that most teachers are actually trying to attain—are, in large part, content objectives of this type," writes E. F. Lindquist in his *Educational Measurement*. Text books are only guides to teaching and not the *summum bonum* of the syllabus. If we are to go beyond the textbook in the subject, to overcome the limitations set by the specialized treatment of classified subjects, we should devise a system of examinations that would test the progress of children towards immediate and ultimate goals.

Teachers know the most general and the specific aims of teaching particular subjects. Every subject has a score of immediate aims and some important ultimate aims. According to the social needs and aspirations of particular peoples in particular epochs, the importance and significance of these objectives change. If we are to devise tests, we should try to measure both content and discipline. Call it by any name or even try to ignore it, the disciplinary conception persists, and rightly it should. Matter and method, interest and effort, content and discipline are three pairs of Siamese twins, interconvertible, that go into teach or learn any subject. To deny anyone of the six above is to close one's eyes to reality, to truth.

Again, coming back to tests, there are new and old type tests. What do we really measure in mathematics by using new-type tests? Only logical reasoning and memory. There is no need to explain

this. By whatever name you call it—recall, recognition, matching, completion, open-end etc.—we only measure these two important values of mathematics. It is so with one subject, why should we not do the same with other classroom subjects also? They have their own immediate objectives in terms of content, i. e., facts and skills, and ultimate objectives in terms of moral and disciplinary values. In language and literature, let us test also children's progress towards moral values like sympathy and goodwill. In science, let us test also their scientific outlook and attitude. In history and geography, let us test also their social growth and civic sense. Again, in mathematics, if we test disciplinary values by the new-type questions, we should test their acquisition of knowledge or content by the essay-type. In such a case, there should be no half marks for half-correct procedures in the essay-type. Since students have been evaluated under the new-type test for their capacity to remember and to reason out, in the essay-type marks should be given only to complete solutions. The student should never be benefited twice for exhibiting the same talent or ability.

The same procedure may be adopted with other subjects also. In language and literature, both mastery of language and development of disciplinary values should be tested by different tests. If it is difficult to prepare tests on disciplines under the different subjects, some common tests may be administered to measure the educational status of every child, utilising the various subjects and activities of the school curriculum. Due consideration should always be given to both the tests in anything that affects the child. These tests on disciplines may also be concentric like tests that measure mastery of content.

We may limit our instruction in subject matter to what is contained in textbooks. But the more important progress, the progress towards moral and social

standards, need not be limited to text-books. Let us reorganise our system of examinations to test the individual completely. Let us make examinations fragmentarily acquired by him.

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Making Libraries Lively

Ragunath Safaya, M. A., Ph. D., Chandigarh

A nation's cultural advancement can well be measured by the number of well-established libraries, and the width and excellence of literature enshrined in these. The quality and quantity of research and scholarship is directly proportional to the amount of accessibility of library facilities. At the University stage, there are two anomalies regarding the accessibility of library services. Sometimes, or at some places, the library facilities are very meagre and far from being satisfactory. Queerer still is the situation that library services, wherever available, are not properly and fully utilised. The main factor responsible for this state of affairs is that even the educated people lack proper reading habits. Poor reading habits are again the consequences of ill-organised libraries in the school, which form the back-bone of University libraries. There lies still a dire need for organising libraries in schools. Though this is not a new subject, a few practical points are suggested below for the guidance of teachers.

Contents

A good library must have the following type of reading material to serve a useful purpose for the pupils and the teachers:-

- (i) Reference-books like dictionaries, encyclopaedias, atlases.
- (ii) Text books prescribed for different school classes.
- (iii) Children's literature and juvenile literature, including story-books,

more meaningful and helpful by measuring the progress of the child himself than by measuring his progress in subjects, fragmentarily acquired by him.

- plays, poetical selections, biographies, travel-accounts, descriptions etc.
- (iv) Books regarding different subjects like literature, general science-history, geography, civics, economics etc.
- (v) Newspapers, dailies, journals.
- (vi) Albums, collections, manuscripts, charts, maps etc.
- (vii) A museum with collections of photographs, coins, curios, minerals, grains, birds, plants, paintings etc.

The major portion of the library should consist of child literature, books depicting stories of travels, explorations, adventures, discoveries, inventions, biographies and fiction.

2. Selection of books

The books should be useful for both the teachers and the pupils, and should be representative of all interests. The selection should be made by a library committee under the guidance of the headmaster. The State Education Department usually provides the headmasters with lists of suitable books approved by the Department and useful for the schools. While selecting books, the following points should be borne in mind :-

- (i) The books must be according to the mental level of the pupils.

They should evoke interest among the students and should correspond to their aptitudes.

- (ii) The language of the books should be simple, readable and upto the level of difficulty of the pupils.
- (iii) The format of the books should be attractive, the print clear and bold, the paper white and attractive. The books should be well-bound with coloured attractive jackets,
- (iv) The books should be costly. Book lists should be got from the book-sellers and a judicious selection made. On the spot selection is also profitable, as it helps in quick and proper selection.
- (v) All specimen copies and donations in terms of books should be stored in the library. Each student also should be asked to contribute one or more books to the school library.
- (vi) Many copies of important books should be purchased, so that many pupils are able to read the same simultaneously. More picture books should be provided to younger students.

3. Finance and equipment

The Government should more liberally subsidise the school libraries, especially the teachers' libraries. The school amalgamated fund can be used for the maintenance of the students' section of the library. Every school should have a well-furnished library and reading room. The library must be made the most attractive place in the school. It should be housed in a spacious, well-built hall (or room) with the walls suitably coloured, and the rooms decorated with flowers and artistically framed pictures and prints of famous paintings. The furniture, book shelves, tables, chairs, reading desks—should all be carefully designed with an eye to artistic effect

and functional efficiency." The open-shelf system should be introduced, so that pupils have free access to books. There should be an attractive caption for each almirah. The reading room also should be adequately furnished and decorated with informational material. The seating arrangement should be comfortable, and noises, distractions or disturbances must be avoided. The dailies should be displayed on high tables with slanting tops. The journals should be displayed in good order on the tables in the reading room. A catalogue must invariably be there to guide the students in finding out the books. Attention should be paid to the ventilation of the room. The reading room should be decorated with good art pictures, landscapes and portraits of eminent people.

4: Role of the librarian

Every Secondary School should have a library under a trained and qualified librarian. The librarian must have general education, professional training in librarianship and wide experience about the world of literature. He must know the languages and scripts in vogue in the State. Where a whole-time librarian cannot be engaged, some teachers must be trained in the management of the school library as a part of their training courses. In-service training in library science may be arranged for teachers. The librarian must always be on the look-out for fresh and useful books. He must announce to the students the names of new books added to the library and must guide them in the proper selection of books. He must be able to tell them, whenever needed, the subject matter of a particular book. The librarian must catalogue the books properly and maintain them well. He should prepare a directory and lists of books of different kinds. He should regulate library hours, and enforce definite library rules. He should maintain library discipline. He is also responsible for giving due publicity to good books. He

should display cuttings of book-reviews, jackets and lists on the notice-board. He should occasionally arrange book-exhibitions.

5. Library Rules

There should be definite library rules. The pupils should borrow books for a specific period and return in time. Defaulters should be fined. They should not tear off leaves, spoil by writing or disfigure library books.

6. Role of Teachers

The teacher must guide the pupils in the selection of books. He should encourage them to read more and more. He should give them assignments and ask them to maintain a diary in which they write their comments.

7. Service

The library should have three sections—(a) the Central Library, (b) the Class Library and the (c) Subject Library in charge of teachers teaching various subjects. The Central Library should comprise all the reference material and general literature. The Class Library should be in the hands of teachers in charge of various classes. The stock of the Class Library must be replenished at frequent intervals, so as to have wide variety. The class teacher should use the Class Library effectively to develop correct reading habits. A student in the class should be put in charge of the Class Library. The student-in-charge may be changed every month, so as to give training to as many students as possible. Usually, the students receive greater impetus to read books, if they are put in charge of Class Libraries.

The Subject Libraries should be under the charge of the subject teachers, and should include text-books, books on related subjects, advanced books and other reference material. The subject teacher, if he makes the best of the Subject-Library, will be inspired to love his own subject and will be able to infuse love of the subject amongst his pupils through allowing them to read or at least browse over the books.

As regards the mode of issuing books, library cards may be issued to the students. The simplest method is to maintain an issue register, wherein each student is allotted a few pages in which books read by him are entered date-wise. One great advantage of this system is that the teacher or headmaster can know at a glance the extent of the studies made by the pupils. Each student must be asked to maintain a diary in which he enters date-wise the names of the books he reads together with brief descriptions of the subject matter and important extracts and quotations.

The library must remain open during the recess period and during vacations, so that the pupils have free access to it during their leisure time. A definite allotment should be made to library-work in the daily time-table. Different periods may be allotted to different classes for library work, so as to avoid over-crowding.

There should be close coordination between libraries of different schools, so as to give maximum benefit to the pupils. Frequent exchange of books is to the advantage of all.

It is in this way that a school library will work as "a live workshop, a power-station of intellectual light, and an instrument for putting progressive methods into practice".

U. K. School-Girl's Verses on India

A 14-year-old Birmingham girl's verse giving the reasons why she wants to visit India has won a competition organised by a local newspaper to mark the city's recent Commonwealth Week. The competitors were asked to say in 50 words which Commonwealth country they would like to visit and why.

Carol Anne Priest, a pupil at a girls' grammar school, set out her reasons in verse:

If I could leave this island home,
To India I would like to roam,
See gleaming golden minarets,
And fountains with a myriad jets,

And dozy oxen still surviving
Against machines men now are driving,
I'd love this dark, mysterious land
Where old and new walk hand-in-hand.

Carol also won a painting competition held at the same time. The Commonwealth Weeks were organized in Birmingham to coincide with the Government-sponsored Commonwealth Exhibition touring major cities in the United Kingdom.

Carol shared the food prize she received for both the winning entries with members of an old people's club near her home.

Six Culprits Of Varsity Affairs

Raghbir Sahai Nigam; Ex-Principal, Mandla (M.P.)

At Dehradun recently Shri V. V. Giri, Governor of U.P., listed "six culprits" responsible for the deteriorating state of affairs in the universities. The six culprits were students, teachers and teacher-politicians, political affiliations and attempts to exploit students by political parties, parents, the community in general and the last but not the least, journalists.

To this pontifical list, I may be permitted to add 'the incompetence of the rulers'. The Government does not know its own mind. The machinery is, as a consequence, wobbling, undecided, and never takes any action in time.

Pandit Nehru has admitted that the root-cause of indiscipline and vulgarity is that the universities are crowded by students whose fathers had no university education. It should be now understood that the lower ranks of political parties and even their middle ranks are made up

of men and women whose parents had no collegiate or even a full course of High School education.

The administration has become lax, because of the fact that at the top it consists of men who had no experience of governing and as a result even the direction (which has been constituted anew by corrugating the steel frame and replacing the strands by bamboo sticks) portion is rendered ineffective. The executive leg has been completely immobilised, because of the fear of leaderocracy, a rabble which can be set against anybody like the hounds.

The law and order situation is deteriorating fast. Shall the Burmese precedent be followed here? And then the enemy is at the threshold.

If the students cannot be controlled, then it is impossible to control the rabble, especially when the enemy's agents are exciting it. Still there is a chance.

Teaching of Regional Geography : its Pros and Cons

Sudarshan Ahluwalia, B.A., B.T., M.Ed., Lecturer, Government Basic Training College, Hatta (Damoh) M.P.

"Man has always been marching forward since the 'dawn of life'. If you do not believe, open your history."

H. VAN LUN.

Change a reality

Tennyson rightly said that "the old order changeth yielding place to new". Everything around us is in a state of flux, the wheels of creation and destruction move on perennially; everything is either growing or diminishing; nothing is really stable. With the advent of Science and Technology, new grounds are being covered daily and even hourly in acquiring knowledge. The content of every branch of knowledge is being reviewed, reinterpreted and refashioned after necessary pruning. Geography as a school subject has borne creditably the stress and strain of the changing times. Dr. Isaiah Bowman emphatically remarks: "It is often said that Geography does not change. In truth, geography changes as rapidly as ideas and technologies change, that is, the meaning of geographical conditions changes."

What is Geography ?

Etymologically speaking, Geography means "description of the earth". In the hoary past, it was thought to be a mere "catalogue of the names of bays, seas, mountains, rivers and cities",—"a mere recital of unrelated facts." Consequently emphasis was laid on "learning by rote" and "mechanical memorization".

In the present era, Geography has changed altogether. Humanization of the subject has taken place, and now stress is laid on "causal relationships". This trend has, in fact, rejuvenated the study

of Geography. The real rebirth of Geography took place in the 19th century, and the foundation of Scientific Geography was firmly laid by Alexander Von Humboldt and Carl Ritter, the two noted geographers who presented the subject as a bridge between the physical sciences and humanistic studies.

Barker defines Geography as "the science of the study of adjustment of human groups to their physical environment as well as the adjustment of Nature to human groups." In short, we can say that the interaction of Man and Environment forms the content of Geography. The jingle coined by Edmund Clenew Bentley has been proved to be a silly distortion:

The art of Biography
Is different from Geography.
Geography is about maps,
But Biography is about chaps.

Value of Geography

The value of Geography in the world of to-day needs little reiteration or emphasis. To-day, the world is a seething cauldron of nasty national ambitions. Technological advance has annihilated time and distance. Apparently, the world has shrunk, but inwardly the peoples of the world are poles apart. The chief barrier athwart the paths of international friendship is ignorance of the world, of the lands and their peoples. And here is one of Geography's best opportunities to contribute to the welfare of mankind; for by studying the mutual relations existing between human beings everywhere and their natural environment, we gain a sympathetic understanding of how and why our foreign neighbours live as they do. By sheer dint of the above-quoted merit,

Geography occupies a pedestal of esteem in the secondary school curriculum, and has earned the unique honour of being included in the Science as well as the Arts courses of study.

Pandit Nehru, in his message to the Indian Geographer—the first issue of the Annual Magazine of the Association of Indian Geographers, New Delhi, has remarked with authenticity:

"Geography counts in a multitude of ways, and it is well, therefore, that we pay attention to it, not only in the rather narrow way it is taught in our schools and colleges, but as something which tells us of the development of humanity and of the mighty forces that have moulded man since the beginning of his life on the earth."

Branches of Geography

The widening of the frontiers of Geography has made it imperative to classify and categorise geographical knowledge into certain definite branches. An analytical survey of the contents of Geography reveals that the subject has been categorised and classified by different geographers at different times under varying labels, viz., Physical Geography; General Geography; Regional Geography; Economic Geography; Commercial Geography; Human Geography; Mathematical Geography; Practical Geography; Bio-geography; Zoo - geography; Anthropo-geography; Climatology; Geo-morphology and so on.

Regional Geography

The concept of Regional Geography is the culminating point of Modern Geography. The region or the regional treatment of geographical phenomena is the heart of Modern Geography. The teaching of the Geography of the whole world or of a particular country on the basis of 'regions' is recognised as a modern and rational approach in all the

progressive countries of the world. It is the grand finale in the geographical symphony. It is a vital and indispensable part of the subject, and for the general reader it is and always has been Geography par excellence.

The New Age

At the present juncture, let us try to probe into the place, value and importance of this branch of study. To many of us it seems that the student treatment of regional geography is little more than a regurgitation of factual gruel, having no claims to the status of either science or scholarship. A careful analysis will reveal that such a view is lopsided and even untenable. If we deeply ponder over the needs of the hour, we clearly see that in an age, when space is rapidly shrinking, when new means of transportation reduce vast expanses of ocean to inland lakes and continents to the size of principalities, the pre-war notions are as outmoded as pre-war arms and weapons. Now, we are required to see things from unusual angles. The geography teacher should now provide the pupils "a binocular vision", rather than "a mess of one-eyed specialist pottage". He should give the pupils a synoptic view of every diverse, interacting factor, conceivable in a region, besides enabling them to understand "the terrestrial whole" and "unity in diversity". Regional Geography, rightly speaking, has a definite viewpoint of its own, and is not a mosaic of bits borrowed from other subjects. It satisfies the universal impulse in sage or savage, the desire for knowledge or mere curiosity. Regional Geography is the only branch of Geography which gives the necessary widening of outlook without vagueness of detail. It provides opportunities to present the subject matter in a connected manner, for in dealing with each regional unit, a combined application of the essentials of practically all the branches of the subject is required.

What is a "Region"?

There is a problem with a capital P that confronts every student of Regional Geography. It is rather mysterious that pioneers in the field are not unanimous on the point of defining 'Region', especially on the world level. A maze of factors confronts one who aspires to divide the world into regions, as to think geographically is to think from a world standpoint. In fact, the term 'region' is not restricted to any specific type of region. One may see how man's work is related to natural environment in a political region, a climatic region, an economic region, or a region of some other type. Moreover, the type of region introduced into the curriculum differs at different levels of instruction. At the higher secondary stage, the study of the "Major Natural Regions of the World" is introduced. The phrase "natural region" does not imply merely "physical region"; the word "natural" is used not as opposite to "human", but as opposite to "artificial" or "political", for a natural region is one which ignores artificial political boundaries which men have set up between their provinces and countries. The term "Major Natural Region" means a large portion of the earth's surface, over which the physical and human conditions are sufficiently uniform to allow the area to be considered as a unit. The theory of "Natural Regions" first put forward by Herbertson and later developed by Roxley, Fawcett, Unstead, Lyde and others, is a concept of "geographic synthesis", upon which rests the solid foundation of Regional Geography. The term has been analysed by many and found notoriously difficult to be defined precisely. However, these days, we have taken Herbertson's point of view as the most authentic and authoritative, as it is quite comprehensive, clear and commendable.

Aims and objectives

S. W. Wooldridge, in his book, *The Geographer as a Scientist*, remarks that the

aim of Regional Geography is "to gather up the disparate stands of the systematic studies, the geographical aspects of other disciplines, into a coherent and focussed unity, to see Nature and Nurture, physique and personality as closely related and interdependent elements in specific regions."

The major objective of such geographic instruction is "to assist in the development of the child through giving him a knowledge of the inter-relationships existing between man and his natural environment in specific regions and an ability to apply such knowledge in solving the problems of living". In other words, Regional Geography, based on major natural regions, aims at enabling the pupils, in some sense, to "cover the world" through regional syntheses in simple terms, comprising the bare facts of relief and climate as a background to a survey of human economics. To give the pupils an understanding of the "world framework" or, as some writers name it, "the world as a whole", the regional treatment provides a healthy departure in the teaching procedure. The introduction of dynamic methods of teaching can revitalize geographical learning to an appreciable extent.

Concluding Remarks

Teaching Geography on a regional basis not only reveals the regional circumstances, but also points out the external relations of the regions under study. This method is the most scientific, because it is systematic, orderly and logical.

A model experiment, along statistical lines was conducted by Anthony D'Souza to ascertain whether the teaching by the Regional Method can be considered as a better one than the usual Descriptive Method. It is important to note that the conclusions arrived at by the experimenter are quite encouraging. The experimenter found that the average marks scored by the group to whom lessons were given by the Descriptive Method were much less

than the average marks scored by the students of the group taught by the Regional Method. Furthermore, the experimenter supplemented his statistical findings, based on the theory of probability, with the observed value of the various mathematical averages as well as the graphs, charts and tabular distributions separately for the marks scored by the two groups of students, and arrived at the conclusion that, not only in average performances, but also in performances in general, the students belonging

to the group taught by the Regional Method were much better than those taught by the usual Descriptive Method. In short, the experiment proves that the value of teaching by the Regional Method far outweighs the same by the Descriptive Method.

To lift the routine type of teaching in Geography out of the rut, it shall be wise to lay stress on regional treatment. Our sincere efforts alone can make the teaching of Geography effective, efficient and interesting. Let us strive for the best.

Wastage in Secondary Education

S. K. De, M. A (Cal.), H. Dip. Ed. (Dublin), Cer-Psy. (Edin.), Calcutta.

The evils of the present system of external examinations have been severely criticised by the Mudaliar Commission. The Secondary Education Project Team, which was appointed by the Government of India with funds provided by the Ford Foundation, also criticised the evils of examinations. Here we are not going to consider whether it is feasible or desirable to abolish external examinations, but to see whether it is possible to check the huge wastage in secondary education which is a permanent feature not only of the State of West Bengal, but also of all the Boards of Secondary Education in India. The system of examination, as it stands today, is a colossal national wastage. An analysis of the School Final and the Intermediate Examinations of the Boards and Universities of India will show a percentage of failure (not official) ranging from 40% to 60%. It is a national wastage.

This failure is not merely due to the fact that students are not at all earnest about their studies, that sports and cinemas and other activities divert their attention and leave them little time to apply themselves seriously to their studies.

They may be responsible to some extent. We must not, however, forget the fact that students not only in India, but all over the world are of different ability and aptitude. We think that this failure is largely due to the fact that students have to appear at examination in groups of subjects which are compulsory and which they must take, whether they like them or not. If all examination subjects are optional and students are allowed to appear at examination, at their own acceleration, twice a year, in March and September, the percentage of failures will come down.

Since the last war, many countries in Europe have endeavoured to give greater flexibility in the requirements and thus greater liberty both of choice of subjects and syllabus and combinations of options. So there is no justification in compelling every student to take History, Geography, Classics, English, Science, Mathematics; or every student of Higher Secondary Schools to take two core subjects and at least three elective subjects. In Europe, almost everywhere the uniqueness of the Classics-Mathematics combination has

been abandoned. In France, there is a proposal to allow baccalaureats of "sciences, humanities et économiques and of enseignement moderne" as well as various classical combinations. Schools are allowed to offer syllabuses of their own choice in Belgium and Italy.

In England the idea of compulsory combination of subjects, which had to be taken together at one and the same time, has been abandoned since 1951 in favour of G. C. E. (General Certificate of Education) which will bear details of the subjects in which passes at Ordinary and Advanced levels have been attained. The G. C. E. is designed as an all-purpose examination. There is a wide range of subjects from modern and classical languages to embroidery and engineering drawing; most of these can be taken at three levels of achievement, namely, 'Ordinary', 'Advanced' or 'Scholarship'. A candidate need not take all his subjects at a time, he can add to them or improve his level in any of them in subsequent years. The possession of a G. C. E. is a misnomer; it may consist of a pass in one subject at Ordinary level or three at Advanced. G. C. E. itself, therefore, means nothing; it is only when a specific purpose is in mind that its value can be assessed. Universities, professions, trades, Civil Services and Army Services are to determine the composition of the G. C. E. necessary to qualify a candidate for entry, and students may select subjects with a definite career in their mind. Like G. C. E., if pupils here too are allowed option to take any subject or any number of subjects with an eye to their choice of future careers, the number of failures will come down.

Again here, paper setters are sometimes responsible for the large percentage of failures. Sometimes essay type questions are not carefully phrase^d, and paper setters do not care to see whether it is possible for the examinee to understand under test conditions what they want or whether the question can be answered from what they have learnt. Still more serious it becomes

when questions are set outside the prescribed syllabus or very stiff questions (not stiff, of course, according to the judgement of the paper-setter) are set to examine the mental calibre of the pupils. This is so because paper-setters are often selected from renowned professors and principals of big colleges or lecturers of the Post-Graduate Department (and not from heads of schools.)

To remedy this, the Ministry of Education, Government of India, has taken steps for establishing a Bureau of Examination Research, and the first tangible work of the Ministry of Education was to inaugurate a Seminar on Examination at Bhopal in March, 1955. In this Seminar it was settled unanimously that, to remedy some of the evils of written examinations, a preliminary list of suitable questions on different subjects should be obtained from qualified and experienced teachers. "The examining body should appoint a panel of subject specialists consisting preferably of three members. After going through the questions suggested by the teachers, the panel should draw the question paper, which should, as far as possible, contain questions suggested by the teachers of the subject. No further moderation of the paper should be necessary."

The Seminar also suggested that no innovation or substantial change in the nature of questions should be introduced without two years' previous notice to teachers and students about the nature of changes in examination envisaged. In our opinion, even this change should be gradually introduced; say, 25% of the questions may be changed in the first year and another 25% in the second year and so on. This alone will ensure an improvement of the process of teaching and learning. The Conference of Chairmen and Secretaries of the Boards of Secondary Education held in 1956 endorsed the same approach. The University Grants Commission also accepted the

fundamentals of this approach. Following the recommendations of the Bhopal Seminar on examinations and the Conference of the Chairmen and Secretaries of the Boards of Secondary Education, the All India Council has set up an Examination Unit to implement the programme of examination reform.

The short time allowed to examiners for going through the answer scripts is also responsible to some extent for the large number of failures. Quite a large number of candidates appear at the School Final Examination, but examiners are allowed very little time to exercise their judgement, and as such, accuracy is sacrificed for speed. They have generally to examine 75 to 100 papers every week over and above their normal duties in their institutions—which is not humanly possible. Naturally, fatigue and vexation set in, and the result is the students have to suffer. It is no good to cite the instances of England and Wales. There, too, examiners do not get more time than here, but one redeeming feature there is that questions there are mostly of the short type and objective nature, which do not take much time to score.

Other factors which are responsible for the large percentage of failures, may be summarised as follows :—

(a) Percentile basis of scoring, which is nowadays regarded as unscientific, is responsible to some extent. It is really very difficult, nay, impossible for an examiner to determine whether one should get 30 or 29 or 31. If one gets 29, his fate is sealed, although it requires a God to discriminate between 29 and 30. So the simpler and better system is to use the five-point scale in which 'A' stands for excellent, 'B' for good, 'C' for fair and average, 'D' for poor, and 'E' for very poor, with each point divided into two, plus and minus. This will obviate the artificial distinction between 'near pass' and 'near failure'. The little demarcation between 'pass' and 'fail' should be drawn at a point, such that it does not pass through an area of thick

population in the normal probability curve. It is not possible to come to an absolute judgement, but we may arrive at a logical and psychological consideration, and that consideration will be satisfied by a five-point scale. The Mudaliar Commission has also recommended this five-point scale, and some of the States, we hear, have already accepted this scale, and they have been publishing examination results of candidates who have secured a first or second class in alphabetical order ; but why our Board has not accepted this scale is not known to us.

(b) Frequent changes of pieces to be read in language books is also responsible to some extent for this sorry state of things. Changes, of course, are necessary to save the teachers from boredom and monotony; but changes should be gradually introduced; say, one-third of the pieces may be changed every third year.

(c) Explanations and critical questions in English tests should be allowed to be answered in the mother-tongue of the Pupils. That will discourage rote memorisation and encourage real appreciation of the pieces. This method is followed in teaching continental languages and Latin and Greek to the English children,

(d) Substance pieces should be set from prescribed books on rapid reading, instead of being set from unknown pieces. Three easy-reading books may be prescribed for this purpose, and students may be asked to write the substance of any one or two pieces from these books; no other question will be asked from these books. This will increase the reading capacity of the pupils which is nowadays a desideratum.

(e) Passages for translation are often set from standard authors, but these passages are generally too stiff for the S. F. students. The result is that average students generally get 4 to 5 marks out of 20, which is another cause of failure in the second paper. Objection has been raised against the passages from the writings of Rabindranath. Paper-setters

do not know how difficult it is to translate these passages, which apparently seem to be easy, but difficulty is felt when one tries to translate the passages. Not to speak of the S. F. examinees, we do not know how many Honours Graduates can do justice to passages from Rabindranath. It should, therefore, be the duty of the paper-setter to see whether the passages

given for translation are within the "sentence patterns" learnt by the pupils and whether they can be translated with the help of the "controlled vocabulary" which they have learnt in the S.F. stage. If the steps stated above are taken, the number of failures in secondary education will come down.

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Elementary Education (Plea for greater attention)

M. Nagasubramanya Ayyar, Papanasam

There have been of late striking reforms and changes, both on the teaching and administrative sides of education, with varying utility. Any reform, especially in elementary education, needs to be proceeded with caution, to derive maximum benefit for the money spent. Any industrial worker in any field, other than the elementary school teacher, cannot be sure of getting his wage or name, if he is not up to the mark. What with the increase in the growth of schools in number, with an abnormal teacher-pupil ratio of 1 : 35 in attendance, and what with the low salary paid to a teacher — a Class IV servant getting nearly double the emoluments of a higher grade teacher — there has been marked deterioration in efficiency and in discipline. Mr. Kuruvilla Jacob in his address on the 14th March attributes indiscipline in schools to the students' inability to follow the lessons in the class, due to defective foundations, inefficient methods of teaching and impersonal relationship between the teacher and his pupil. The following suggestions are made for improving matters.

Teacher's Training.—To cope with the revised integrated course of elementary

education which has been prepared by able hands, it needs no saying that justice cannot be done by teachers of ordinary tact and ability. All-round knowledge in arts and crafts, besides other subjects, is expected of a teacher. It is my sincere view that S.S.L.C. eligibility should be the minimum qualification fixed for any candidate aspiring to be a teacher. Besides the selection for training deserves to be similar to that of the Public Service Commission by the institution of viva-voce and written tests. For the handling of English, even for Standard V, the knowledge required of a Pre-University-passed hand should be necessary, as matters are. For the teaching of the mother-tongue, the minimum knowledge required must be similar to that of a passed candidate in the Entrance Examination to the Vidwan course. Some technical skill in any two crafts to be codified may also be expected. The period of training may be cut short by one year. The stipend needs to be raised to Rs. 40.

Basic Education.—Of late holding seminars of orienting elementary education to the basic pattern are being held for three days for a group of about 30

teachers, trained in non-basic ways. The Deputy Inspectors conduct the conferences, instilling into the minds of teachers the basic principles involved in basic education methods by writing on the blackboard the gist of the items — the matter covered being the product of information gathered at seminars at higher levels. This aspect is good in itself. What is done at conferences at considerable cost and dislocation to school-work can be attended to at the monthly teachers' meetings presided over by the Deputy Inspectors.

Every teacher in a basic school is at present to proceed with about 30 plans of work chalked out beforehand for the year, and he should correlate the craft teaching with the other subjects with no textbook for his guide. I doubt if even the teacher entrusted with the task of training pupil-teachers could do justice to the task. Unless a good number of Plans of Work with correlated methods are prepared and published by eminent hands for guidance, no tangible improvement is possible. The early life of children would go to waste in the hands of ill-equipped teachers. Knowing this, perhaps, the Government have arranged for the three-day Conferences. For obvious reasons, non-basic schools are more popular than basic ones, as they are allowed to have text books. It would be a good thing for the Government to make the basic schools also fall in line with the non-basic schools, until such time as the idea inculcated in the true basic education system gets popular. Instead of having seminars of various kinds at considerable cost and sacrifice of regular work, one or two model schools worth the name may be run at each of the ranges to serve as an object-lesson in a practical way. About half a dozen Plans of Work may be filmed to serve as documentaries.

Publication of Children's Books.—The holding of periodical gatherings of selected hands at considerable cost at Wallajabad for giving training for a few weeks for

writing children's books is in existence. A much better method would be to take a documentary to inculcate the principles of writing books for show, so that everyone may know and try to prepare books and send them for approval. The world is large. Who knows that only the few selected hands will do full justice to the task? Until the teachers are conversant with such specimens of basic education literature, the elementary education syllabus now prepared may be safely followed by basic schools as well with attention to handicraft as at present followed in non-basic schools for one period a day and with due attention to the points contained in the new orientation programme of elementary education of the basic pattern. Such hobbies as Scouting, Guiding Red Cross activities etc., may be made compulsory in all schools, as these would surely help in social welfare and other beneficial activities.

Teacher-Pupil Ratio.—The Government raised the teacher-pupil ratio two years back from 1:20 to 1:35 in aided schools, on the plea that such an increased ratio was already in force in board schools. There might have been a rule that way. But there are instances of board schools with a staff barely at 1:20 for a number of years even now. The ratio can at best be 1:25 to attend to efficiency. As per the concession shown for having the old ratio for the schools having low attendance, when the G.O. came into force, many aided schools were working with the old ratio, while some big schools in important places have to suffer. 36 to 40 pupils do attend in a Standard, when it is divided into 3 or more sections. The teacher feels helpless in managing the section in higher Standards.

Single Teacher Schools.—At present there are a great many elementary schools under local boards with one teacher for about 20 to 30 pupils in 4 or 5 Standards with apologetic attendance in the higher Standards for a considerable time. Such schools may be allowed to work with

Standards 1 to 3 only until Standard 4 can have an attendance of at least 10. The higher Standard pupils may seek admission in any of the adjoining schools in a convenient area. In some places, there are 4 or 5 schools, some of them having one digit strength in each of Standards 4 and 5. Such schools also may be made to work in 3 Standards, till they are able to have an attendance of at least 20 in a Standard.

Common Test.—At the end of Standard 4, there needs to be a common test, both

viva-voce and written, between at least two adjoining schools. At the end of Standard VII (revised), there should be a district-wise test. To avoid detention, moderation in marks is resorted to, to make the promotion liberal. At least 25% of marks in each of the subjects must be insisted on for a pass.

Publication of Text Books.—Though uniform text-books may be prescribed for Standards 4 and 7, the other Standards may be left to private enterprise.

TEACHING MUSIC

Prof. P. SAMBAMOORTHI, B.A., B.L., Madras.

The Convening of this Seminar constitutes a land-mark in the history of musical education in South India. For the first time music teachers have been brought together on a common platform to discuss problems relating to musical pedagogy and share the fruits of their experience. At present a number of countries are interested in musical education. The International Society for Music Education established under the auspices of the Unesco will be holding its next triennial Conference in 1961 in Vienna.

It is the birth-right of every child to be taught singing. Musical culture conduces to the harmonious and healthy development of the body, the soul and the spirit of young people. At the present day, when society suffers from the danger of technical and materialistic domination, it is our duty to see that pupils in schools enjoy the beauty of music.

Attempts should be made by the music-teacher to stimulate musical thinking and sight singing. Pupils should be induced to borrow music books from the libraries, read the thrilling biographies of great

composers and musicians and cultivate the practice of learning songs presented in simple and correct notation. This will develop creative talents in them and gradually help them to render the pieces with *rāga-bhāva*. A conscious and determined effort should be made to make the study of music both enjoyable and profitable in school.

Performing and Teaching are the two main branches of the musical profession. These two careers provide employment to a number of artistes. It is the happy lot of the music-teacher to keep the flame of classical music burning. He has the chance to teach pupils rare compositions of great composers and beautiful compositions of minor and less-known composers.

The music-teacher of the present day cannot be content with merely teaching songs to classes. A far greater equipment is demanded of him or her. Besides possessing a wide repertoire of class-worthy songs, he or she has to know (1) the elementary principles of Bharata-nātya, (2) something of Kathā-kālakshepam (3) varieties of kummi, kolattam, and pinnal kolattam, (4) organisation of musical activities for large groups of pupils, (5) preparation

* Presidential Address at a recent Seminar held under the auspices of the Madras State Sangitha Nataka Sangam

of useful charts and other visual aids, and (6) servicing and care of the musical instruments purchased for the school. Songs which have attractive tunes and appealing words in them should be preferred for being taught. Recent researches in folk music and kuravañji nāṭakas and temple dance-dramas have brought to light a number of fascinating tunes which can be tapped for the purpose of school teaching. Well-planned appreciation talks on chosen classical compositions will go a long way in awakening the artistic instincts of the pupils towards the enjoyment of classical music.

It is a sad comment on our times that no attempts have been made to introduce the teaching of music in boys' schools. If singing inculcates discipline and the study of music develops the human character and personality, it is as much necessary to make provision for its teaching in boys' schools as in girls' schools. No men's college has so far sought affiliation in the teaching of music in the Madras University area, although it is now 32 years since music was introduced as a subject of study in the University curriculum of studies. This is a matter for thought.

It is high time that a Musical Inspectorate was constituted by the Government. They can not only see that music in schools is being properly taught, but also can play a useful part in seeing that the large number of private music schools in South India also function along correct lines.

Mobile squads of concert parties, music parties, dance parties, kāthakālakshepam parties, bhajan parties and folk-dance parties may be subsidised by the State to go to remote villages, give concerts and illustrated talks on the lives of great composers and musicians and thus bring the joys of our musical heritage to the rustic folk.

Every temple should have on its staff a paid musician who will not only teach sacred songs to worshippers but himself conduct bhajans on sacred occasions. He should also organise temple choirs. The choir music rendered well may attract more and more worshippers to the temples.

I hope and trust that, as a result of the deliberations of the Seminar, the music teacher will become actuated by a new spirit in music education and make music a live subject of study in schools.

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OUR EDUCATIONAL DIARY

BY

'PEPYS'

27-2-60. Dr A. L. Mudaliar characterised examination as a curse on students. It was a strain both on the teachers and the students. Training in the College was more important than examination.

x x x

28-2-60. Mr. C. D. Deshmukh said that, as things stood at present, there was no way of abolishing the system of examinations. He said that the U. G. C. was trying to make the examination system a fair and effective one.

1-3-60. Sri K. Balasubramania Iyer said that the problem of the Madras Sanskrit College was dearth of students. He appealed to the parents to encourage their children to study Sanskrit.

x x x

Chief Justice P. V. Rajamannar made a plea that the Arts Courses should also contain provision for the study of elements of law.

x x x

Sri G. D. Naidu said that there was an urgent need for more Technological Colleges than Arts Colleges.

5-3-60. Sri C. D. Deshmukh uttered a warning that State influence in the system of higher education should go, for that would only lead to the "Balkanisation" of the University world. The change in the medium of instruction should be left to the judgment and discretion of those whose business it was to impart education.

19-3-60. The Andhra Pradesh Education Minister, moving the demand under Education for the next year, said the expansion of primary education would continue according to programme. 2000 teachers were to be appointed for the relief of the educated unemployed. The village and district panchayats would be

put in charge of primary and secondary education, and they would be given 100% grant for building and furniture. He said that grants to secondary schools had been increased by 75% to 80%. It had been decided to open three junior technical schools and to give loan scholarships to poor students. Economically backward boys and girls other than those belonging to backward classes would also be granted scholarships to the tune of ten lakhs, he announced.

20-3-60. The Mysore Govt. has decided to make secondary education free for all students belonging to the low income group, i.e., those getting Rs. 100 and less per month. This concession would be discontinued, if the student did not secure promotion to higher class, but it would be resumed on promotions in subsequent years. If the parent should give a false income declaration, twice the amount of the fee will be recovered from the parent as if it were arrears of land revenue. If the boy is above the age of 16, he will be rusticated.

[The punishment of rustication of a minor boy for the dishonest declaration of his parent amounts to vicarious punishment which is unknown to law. This punishment deserves to be deleted. And the provision that no appeal shall lie against the decision of the D.E.O. in this regard is equally unsupportable. It is silly for Government to get panicky in such matters and fight shy of the decisions of courts.]

x x x

Because of cuts in the Ministry of Food and Agriculture allotment of the Third Five-year Plan, the proposal to start five agricultural universities may now be partially abandoned.

THE EDUCATIONAL REVIEW

22—3—60. The Education Minister said that, in introducing Tamil as the medium in the colleges, he was not transgressing any university rule. He assured the Assembly that more hours would be allotted to the study of English. He said that the experiment with Coimbatore Govt. College would be watched for three years. He also said that the question whether the publication of text books for primary classes should be entrusted to a corporation was under consideration.

23—3—60. The Central Advisory Board of Education has decided in favour of maintaining the *status quo* with regard to the S.S.L.C. examination. It was considering the desirability or otherwise of instituting two types of public examinations at the higher secondary stage, one with English and another without it.

24—3—60. Sri Subramaniam emphatically denied that he had at any time interfered in University affairs. But he maintained that as Education and Finance Minister, he had the right to have a say in matters of higher education, especially when the Government was asked to shoulder the burden of higher salaries to college teachers in the context of fall in admissions in the colleges. Again, in matters of student discipline, he had a right to advise principals as to how they should tackle it.

26—3—60. The draft plan of the Ministry of Scientific Research contemplates the opening of 15 engineering colleges and 35 polytechnics at a cost of 166 crores. It is also proposed to start part-time classes in these institutions.

x x x

A new medical college would be started at Tirupati from the next academical year.

28—3—60. The Mysore Government has decided to entrust the management of primary schools to Taluk Boards to be newly constituted.

31—3—60. The Madras University has decided to institute a degree of Bachelor of Library Science and a diploma course in Criminology and Forensic Science. The diploma course in librarianship would henceforth be discontinued. The Senate referred to the Syndicate the question as to whether affiliated Colleges could be permitted to conduct diploma classes in selected subjects.

1—4—60. The Speaker of the Andhra Pradesh has appealed to the universities in Andhra to teach all the subjects in Telugu.

9—4—60. The Education Minister told the Assembly that the Vice-Chancellor has agreed to the choice of the Govt. Arts College, Coimbatore, for introduction of Tamil in 1960—61 in the first year of the B. A. Course. He said that English might be retained with P. U. C., where the students had to learn a number of subjects including science subjects.

12—4—60. Dr. M. S. Thacker, Secretary, Scientific Research Ministry, has recommended that liberal grants should be given for the promotion of scientific research.

[I would humbly suggest that Universities may be permitted to start diploma courses in the various scientific subjects for students who have obtained brilliant marks in the public examination in scientific subjects and mathematics, but have not been declared eligible. It will also solve the problem of falling strength in Arts Colleges.]

THE REFORM METHOD LITERARY READERS, BOOKS I-III

BY

HENRY MARTN, M. A., O. B. E.

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Spiritual Message of Nammazhwar

By M. A. Narayana Iyengar, M.A., B.L., Retired Deputy Director of Public Instruction, Bangalore.

I.1.5.

Men worship different gods or different forms of God, according to their knowledge, spiritual insight and development. And these gods or forms of God are perfect, so far as their worshippers are concerned, and grant them their desired objectives. For behind them all stands the Lord as their Internal Controller. And He grants to worshippers the fruits of their worship according to the law of karma ordained by Him.

I.1.6.

Those that stand, sit, lie down or wander, those that stop standing or sitting or lying down or moving, all are manifestations of God. Their action or inaction is controlled by Him, who is their Inner Controller. (There is evolution and change in all inanimate and animate things in the universe under the guidance of God. Both individual souls and matter are governed by God.) But God Himself is a mysterious infinite existence which pervades everywhere, undergoes no change, and exhibits the same glorious eternal nature at all times, past, present or future. He is eternally enduring and firmly established in the Vedas.

I.1.7.

The divine Veda, which shines gloriously in the minds of great sages and seers, has God for its sole subject. It declares that during the cycle of creation He spreads Himself as the countless objects of the universe, made up of the five elements of the enduring ether, fire, air, water and earth. During periods of evolution and involution, He enters into them in order to cause changes and transformations. The wonder is that He hides Himself in them in the manner in which the soul hides itself in

the human body. During cycles of dissolution, He devours all the objects of the universe. That is, He reduces them to a subtle, superfine state, and keeps them within Himself. This is to give rest to the toiling souls, granting them a respite from *samsāra* (worldly life), till the next cycle of creation begins. The Lord thus pervades the universe and controls it at all times.

I.1.8.

Men worship many gods. Each worshipper thinks that the god he worships is the Highest. But these various gods themselves scarcely know how this vast universe, compounded of ether and other elements, proceeds from the womb of the one and only Lord at the time of creation, evolves for ages undergoing various changes, and ultimately dissolves at the time of dissolution and merges itself in Him. In the *Purānas* (ancient legends) it is stated that Brahmā, the four-faced Creator, creates the universe and teaches wisdom to the gods: and that Rudra, famous for his burning the three aerial cities of the demons, is the destroyer of the universe at the time of dissolution. But the truth is that the one Supreme Lord is both Brahmā and Rudra.

I.1.9.

If we say that He exists, we recognise His existence. If we say that He does not exist, even then He exists as the subject of the predication, "does not exist". It has already been declared that God has manifested Himself as all the objects of the visible universe and that He is also their Inner Controller. In the universe we have things perceptible by the senses like the stars, the sun, the moon, the animals etc. There are also 'things' like

time, soul, ether etc., which we cannot perceive. When we say that God exists, we may understand the statement to mean that we identify Him with the perceptible universe. When we say that He does not exist, it may be no more than identifying Him with objects which have no form and are not perceptible. The truth is that God exists eternally without ever suffering any destruction. He pervades everywhere. He is inseparably connected with both visible and invisible things. In short, both visible and invisible secondary existences are the qualities or attributes or 'the body' of the Lord. He eternally exists, whether philosophers acknowledge His existence or argue that He does not exist.

1.1.10.

His intimate association with animate and inanimate objects does not taint Him in any way. For consider the manner in which He penetrates and pervades the universe. He is immanent in the vast Time-space Continuum in which stellar systems move round one another for aeons of time. He also contracts Himself to such an extent that He enters within each of the millions of atoms of the cool, primaeval waters, and finds it as spacious as the vast universe. He resides in everyone of the objects and beings of earth and Heaven, not excepting the most insignificant ones among them. He is the hidden Inner Controller of the individual souls, which are not perceptible objects, but which are radiant with the light of consciousness, which is their nature. At the time of Dissolution, He destroys the names and forms of all things and shines Himself gloriously alone, as the universe is not then in a state of manifestation.

ETHICS OF NAMMAZHWAR

1.2.1

Give up everything completely — wealth and position, relatives and friends, and pleasures of every kind. Give up everything other than God deliberately

and without any lingering relish for what is renounced. For all things belong to God, who is also your own life and soul. He is the Lord of both the visible and invisible universes. He is the Lord of all individual souls, including yours. Surrender entirely to His grace, seeking refuge in Him as your Eternal Home.

1.2.2

Why should all things other than God be given up? Why should pleasures and comforts be renounced? They are ephemeral, lasting only for a moment. Fleeting is lightning which flashes for a moment and is gone. Briefest still is the embodied life of the soul. The individual souls enter into physical bodies according to their Karma and have soon to leave them. Enduring happiness cannot be built on this fleeting foundation. Consider for a moment this position, and you will need no further arguments. So, cultivate devotion to God who exists eternally without change.

1.2.3

How is this renunciation to be effected and how is this devotion to God cultivated? The basis of all attachment, which stands in the way of renunciation, is the feelings of 'oness' and 'mine-ness' (*ahankāra* and *mamakñra*). You feel that you are different from and more precious than other men. You are eager that your interests should be safeguarded at all costs, as against those of others. This attitude and selfish actions that follow from it will plunge you into the sorrows and pleasures of life and will bind you more and more securely with the chains of karma. Cut off therefore the sense of 'you' and 'yours' from the roots. Become devoted to God, loving all His children. Pray to Him or meditate on Him always. Learn to experience joy in this communion. The soul cannot attain to anything higher. For through such communion, it realises its true nature, realises god and attains salvation.

— (To be continued)

EDITORIAL

The Teaching Machine

In this age of machines, it is not surprising that a machine to teach should make its appearance. Till now that poor, neglected drudge, the teacher, was at least considered indispensable for teaching. There could be no school without atleast one teacher. And the teachers, no doubt out of selfishness, had laid down that there could be no learning without their necessary presence. But now their pride, poor thing as it may be when compared with the pride of princes or ministers or bureaucrats, faces a fall.

News is to hand that Professor B. F. Skinner, who occupies the Chair of Psychology at Harvard, has invented a mechanical substitute for the pedagogue. George R. Price, writing about it in the Sunday Standard of April 10th, describes it as "a shallow box with a narrow window across the top and a lever mechanism to move a worksheet from front to back".

The student has to work through a series of lessons with the help of the machine. A number of questions, mostly leading ones, are given on strips or discs. These appear, one at a time, before the student in the window in the machine. The student reads the question, writes down his answer and moves the lever. His moves up under a glass in the upper part of the window, beyond tampering, and the correct answer provided in the lesson becomes visible in the lower part of the window. The student can move the lever only in one direction, and he can merely give himself marks for his success or failure in answering the questions. Thus the child proceeds through a series of questions.

Professor Skinner's machine is stated to be based on the principle that "no other

motivation is necessary to make a person study hard than the reward of finding out, as soon as he has answered a question, that his answer is correct". The method of training used in the machine is similar to that adopted in the case of animals. Desired behaviour is to be reinforced (by reward rather than punishment) as quickly and as often as possible. Behaviour is to be 'shaped' into the desired pattern through a series of small steps.

Mr. Price claims: "The startling hope that teaching machines offer is to provide a new and better source of motivation to make children work hard and at the same time make their study so pleasant and effective that even the dull ones can learn hard subjects without frustration".

So, after all, the teacher is present by proxy. He has to prepare the lesson sheets for the machines. He has to grade the boys from their scores and give them the kind of lessons they need. However, the machine may relieve the teacher of a great deal of the routine drudgery of correction and give him more time for creative teaching.

Incidentally, the teaching machine is a plea for more frequent tests and examinations. Those who wish to do away with these altogether are anxious only for political or other reasons entirely unconnected with education, that there should be no failures. For their objective to be reached, more tests are the only way. Examinations can be made more attractive by being held more often. Students whose preparation has been checked in a series of tests, are not likely to find the final examination a bugbear. On the other hand, it will appear to them a pleasant opportunity to find out whether they can answer correctly.